



State of California  
**Respiratory Care Board**

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**Inquiry:** I am a licensed RCP in the State of CA for the past 15 years and I am about to change pace in my career. I am considering accepting a position in a subacute facility but I am rather uncomfortable with a specific facility because they schedule 1 RCP for every 12 vent-dependant patient. This is in addition to trach care, breathing treatments and circuit changes. I do not want to jeopardize my license with taking such an excessive load and frankly, some patients will be neglected. How often should vents be checked in a subacute facility and how many vents can one therapist be reasonably accountable for? The AARC guidelines does not specify on quantity nor frequency. However, it does stipulate that a thorough vent check is done when there is a change in patient status, order, or interruption of circuitry. Can you assist me in finding what is safe for the patient as well as protecting my license?

**Response:** I wish I had a specific law or regulation to point you toward in order that you could reasonably make an informed decision about a change in your employment. Unfortunately, I do not. The laws and regulations surrounding appropriate staffing for RCP caring for patients on ventilators are far from adequate. Neither the Department of Health Services nor the California medical associations have the answer to your question.

From a professional aspect I would encourage you to review the organizations policies and procedures to see if their philosophy fits in with what you would feel comfortable doing professionally. If their policies do not match your professional values than you may want to consider if this change is right for you.

Reference #: 2005-C-18